

Crisis at SUST deepens

Reopening uncertain as a section of teachers, Sylhet opposition parties demand removal of VC

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Reopening of the Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) has become uncertain as a section of senior teachers are not accepting return of the Vice-chancellor Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed to the campus and demanding appointment of a new VC while opposition parties here are also demanding his 'immediate withdrawal'.

The vice-chancellor left the campus on May 14, when the university was closed sine die following killing of a student in police firing.

Nine deans and departmental heads out of 23 yesterday boycotted an Academic Council meeting and staged a sit-in in front of the VC's office for about half an hour from noon demanding appointment of a new VC. The nine are aligned with opposition parties, sources said.

Dr Akhtarul Islam, former

President of SUST Teachers Association, addressed a brief rally during the sit-in, which was also attended by some other teachers.

Earlier on Tuesday, the nine senior teachers handed over a letter to SUST registrar demanding appointment of a new VC and resumption of academic activities by July 23.

"It will not be possible to work with the VC who had earlier resigned in the face of students' agitation", the letter said.

The VC had returned to the campus under protection by police and ruling party cadres, the letter claimed, saying, this tarnished the image of teachers.

The VC is busy 'managing personal interests since he is not interested in students' welfare', they alleged in the letter.

Signatories to the letter were Prof Dr Reza E Khondaker, Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Dr Muhammad Jainal Abedin, Prof Md. Younus, Prof Md. Ilyas Uddin

Biswas, Prof Mohammad Mizanul Haque Kajol, Prof Tulshi Kumar Dass, Prof Sujoy Chakravarty and Prof Dr. Abdul Awal Biswas.

However, the Academic Council meeting started at 11 am and continued till 1-30 pm, Registrar Jamil Ahmed Chowdhury said after yesterday's meeting. The meeting took several important decisions, he said.

The decision to resume classes and other academic activities will be decided at a Syndicate meeting on July 24 because the Syndicate took the decision to close the university sine die after a student was killed in violence, the registrar said.

On Monday, AL-aligned teachers in a statement expressed their 'no-confidence' on VC Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed and demanded appointment of a new VC from among SUST teachers. The statement signed by Dr. Akhtarul Islam threatened of agitation for non-compliance.

The statement said the VC on his return to the campus is hatching conspiracy to strengthen his position instead of demoting to improve the atmosphere.

The crisis can be resolved through appointment of a new VC, the statement said and demanded a judicial probe into the May 14 incidents.

Meanwhile, the agitation for removal of the VC is gaining momentum in Sylhet as the 14-party opposition alliance has decided to give back-up support to the programmes of their student fronts.

Leaders of the opposition alliance and their student fronts at a meeting held at Shahid Md. Ibrahim Smriti Sangsad office at Sobhanighat in the city on Monday announced agitation programmes including public meeting to press the demand for "immediate withdrawal" of VC Prof Musleh Uddin Ahmed.

They started a mass contact

programme yesterday which will continue till July 22 to gather support for removal of the VC.

Gano Forum will form a human chain today at the city's Court Point to press withdrawal of the VC and appointment of a new one.

The 14-party will also hold a public meeting at the same venue on July 23 on the same demand.

Monday's meeting was chaired by Awami League leader and 14-party alliance co-ordinator in Sylhet ANM Shafiqul Haque. It was addressed by, among others, Sylhet AL secretary-in-charge Abdul Khalique Mayon, district NAP president Syed Abdul Hannan and its secretary Govinda Paul, Ganotantri Party chief Barrister Arosh Ali and its secretary Md. Arif Miah, JSD president Lokman Ahmed, Gano Forum leader Anwar Khan, Samyabadi Dal leader Moshahid Ahmed, Sramik League president Ejajul Haque and general secretary Shamim Rashid Chowdhury.



JMB (Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh) activists Md Ziaur Rahman and Abdul Kayum being sent to jail after a Special Tribunal in Gaibandha sentenced them to 48 years imprisonment for involvement in the August 17 serial bomb blasts last year.

DISPUTE OVER SHRIMP ENCLOSURE

AL, Sramik Dal activists murdered in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An Awami League leader and an activist of Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal were killed in separate incidents in Dumuria and Digholia upazilas of Khulna Tuesday night.

According to Khulna Police Superintendent Moinul Islam, secretary of Dumuria Fisherman's Co-operative Society Shukumar Biswas, 40, was gunned down from point blank range by armed cadres of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) at about 10-40 pm on Tuesday at a fish farm at Uttar Beel in Pabla under Dumuria upazila.

The murder was committed when Shukumar was holding a meeting of the co-operative society

in the compound of the fish farm.

The outlaws stormed into the venue and one of them fired two shots targeting Shukumar. He died while being taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

His younger brother Robin Biswas who also sustained bullet injury in his legs in the attack, is undergoing treatment at KMCH.

The murder may be sequel to a dispute over possession of Uttar Beel. Some outlaws were prevented from illegally occupying the water body, said the Officer-in-Charge of Dumuria thana.

Shukumar Biswas was a leader of Dumuria thana Awami League, the OC said.

Bharat Biswas, maternal uncle of Shukumar, filed an FIR with Dumuria thana yesterday, naming

22 operatives of NBCP as accused, the OC said.

One of the FIR-named accused was arrested hut the OC declined to name his in the interest of investigation.

In the other incident, Krishak Dal leader Zafar Sarder, 48, was hacked to death at 8-30 pm on Tuesday at Mominpur village under Digholia upazila.

He was killed when he was returning home at night after saying Esha prayers at Mominpur Jame Mosque, police said.

His wife Bhanu Bibi lodged an FIR with Digholia thana yesterday naming six persons as accused.

Police said the murder could be sequel to a dispute over possession of a shrimp enclosure. None was arrested.

IU teachers non-cooperate with acting VC

STAR NATIONAL DESK

A new deadlock started at the Islamic University yesterday as the teachers association at a meeting decided to non-cooperate with the newly appointed acting vice-chancellor Prof Anwarul Karim.

The present chaotic situation as regards holding of classes and examination will prolong as the teachers' non-cooperation will continue till a new VC is appointed, campus sources said.

The teachers are demanding removal of the Prof Karim as acting VC and appointment of a new VC from among them.

Yesterday's meeting of the Islamic University Teachers Association (IUTA) was held with its president Prof Faez Moahhad Sirazul Haq in the chair.

The sources said at least 250 teachers aligned with different

political parties attended the meeting. Speaking at the meeting, many of them expressed their anger over appointment of Prof Karim as acting VC on Tuesday.

The teachers were demanding a new VC after Prof Rafiqul Islam, 8th VC of the university, resigned on June 22 in face of agitation by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP.

Sources said Prof. Karim, who was treasurer of the university, was asked to carry out only 'financial and administrative responsibilities' in addition to his routine work as treasurer.

Most of the deans, departmental heads and senior teachers objected to his authority when he called a meeting as an 'acting vice-chancellor' on Thursday. The teachers asked Prof Karim to clarify his post, designation and duties.

On Sunday Prof. Karim left

Kushtia for Dhaka to meet higher authorities there over the issue, campus sources said.

Letter, on Tuesday, a letter was faxed to the registrar of the university from Education Ministry, giving Prof karim 'all powers of VC and asked him to carry out duties of VC until a new VC is appointed'.

Yesterday was first day of Prof. Karim at office.

But soon after he took his chair some teachers phoned him asking him not to discharge any duty as acting VC till the IUTA meeting ends, some teacher told The Daily Star yesterday seeking anonymity.

But Prof. Karim ignored the calls.

The IUTA meeting started at about 10:30 am.

The meeting unanimously reached a decision not to cooperate with the 'acting VC'.

The meeting also decided to

ignore any decision the acting VC takes.

The meeting urged the chancellor of the university and the education minister to take an immediate decision to appoint a new VC from among teachers of the university.

An unstable situation started in the university started on May 18 after the then VC Prof Rafiqul Islam recruited 88 people against 53 vacant posts, violating rules of the University Grants Commission (UGC). Most of the recruits were activists or supporters of ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Soon after, BNP and its fronts organisations started agitation for more jobs for their party men at the university. They demanded at least 200 jobs, campus sources said.

The university was closed amid violence by JCD for more jobs. VC

Prof Rafiqul Islam left the campus on May 19 in the face of JCD agitation.

After 20 days, the university was opened on June 11. But a virtually the dead lock situation was prevailing as the VC did not return to the campus.

When contacted, Prof. Faez Moahhad Sirazul Haq, president of IUTA said the decision to non-cooperate with the acting VC was taken unanimously where at least 250 teachers were present.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Rashid, an eminent writer and columnist and Chairman of the department of English said the situation has not been created overnight. "It is the result of a lot of past anomalies. So the government should immediately pay attention to the issue and fulfill IUTA's demand", he said.

SI arrested for abetting snatching

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A police sub-inspector (SI) was arrested on Tuesday for abetting snatching of Tk one lakh and cell phone from a person at Gopalpur upazila in the district.

SI Shafiqul Islam of Gopalpur police station has been suspended but the alleged snatchers, who reportedly are activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), could not be arrested, police said yesterday.

Police said three JCD leaders including a former vice-president of Gopalpur College students union snatched Tk one lakh and cell phone from Syed Mozibar Rahman Dipty, a contractor of Roads and Highways Department, on Sunday.

SI Shafiqul Islam was standing nearby during the incident, according to a written complaint by Dipty made to Gopalpur police station. He claimed that three JCD men snatched the money and cell phone from him.

The police station recorded a case on Monday, when police high officials from Tangail visited the area and found that SI Shafiqul Islam was involved in the snatching incident.

Tangail Superintendent of Police Mirza Abdullah-hel-Baki told journalists that the accused PSI was suspended temporarily Monday night and was brought to the district police headquarters. The SI was shown arrested on Tuesday.

Son abducted as father refuses to pay toll

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Miscreants abducted a person from Durlupepur village of Gangni upazila in Meherpur district yesterday following his father's refusal to pay them toll of Tk 1.00 lakh.

Police said a gang of criminals several months ago demanded Tk. 1 lakh toll from Sirazul Islam, father of the abducted person and leader of local Awami League (AL).

Sirajul declined to meet their demand and the gang threatened him with a dire consequence.

The miscreants at around 2:am yesterday stormed into the house of Sirazul and made fresh demand for toll.

As the father denied to meet their demand, the gang picked up his son Kajal, 35.

The father received injuries as the miscreants hurled



PHOTO: STAR

Unabated erosion by the Padma devoured at least 100 homesteads in Dauli in Manikganj Sadar upazila in about a week.

Workshop for newsmen held

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A three-day training workshop on 'Gender Discrimination and Violence Against Women' was held at Mymensingh Press Club auditorium yesterday.

With the assistance of Manusher Jono Foundation (MJF), Nari Uddog Kendra (NUK) organised the workshop for local journalists.

The programme was presided over by NUK programme manager Moinuddin Ahmed.

Prof. Reazul Islam as chief guest addressed the inaugural session while Mymensingh Press Club secretary Ataul karim Khokon, Director of Capacity Skill Building and partnership sector of MJF were the special guests.

NUK officials Ismat Ara Yeasmin, Abdul Hannan, Zakiya Sultana and Minhaz Ahmed Dipu were the resource persons at the training session.

A total of 25 journalists working with different national and local dailies took part in it.

Two 'police sources' killed in Kushtia, Chuadanga

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Three people, two of them reportedly police sources, were killed in separate incidents in Kushtia and Chuadanga on Monday.

In Kushtia, cadres of Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF) shot dead one Abul Kalam Azad, 42, son of Ridu Biswas of Alampur village in sadar upazila.

Police said a gang of five GMF cadres led by Kalu, known as a leader of the outfit of the area, entered the house of Azad at about 11:00pm.

They called Azad out of the house and shoot him form point blank range killing him on the spot.

Sources said Azad was a police source. He often went to a local police station.

Sources said GMF leader Kalu several days ago warned Azad against giving any information about him to the police.

Police, however, said Azad was not their source, adding that he (Azad) often gave them information about GMF leader Kalu. Locals and family members of the victim think this was cause behind his killing.

In another incident, one Sahin Uddin, 25, son of Maula Box of Juniadah village in Bheramara upazila in the district succumbed stab injuries at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Sahin, a farmer by profession, was critically injured when unidentified criminals stabbed him with knife in throat.

Police said a gang of assailants

numbering 6 stormed into a betel leaf garden where Sahin was working. They silted his throat with knife.

He was taken to Kushtia general hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Chuadanga, a gang unknown assailants called Sobhan alias Sobha, 35, out of his house at Monohorpara in Jibonnagar upazila in the district at around 12:00pm on Monday.

Yesterday local people found Sobha's slaughtered body lying in a pond of the village.

Informed, police recovered the body and sent it to Chuadanga sadar upazila. The police said Sobha was their source.

Cases were filed with concerned police stations.

Demonstration for power in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Over 500 leaders and activists of Chhatra Sangram Parishad, a combine of student fronts of 14-party opposition alliance brought out a procession in Satkhira town and held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office yesterday protesting severe load shedding and demanding smooth supply of power.

Satkhira district unit of the Chhatra Sangram Parishad organised the programs. The procession was brought out from Shaheed Abdur Razzak Park in the town.

Speakers at the rally said a tougher agitation will be launched

soon if smooth power supply is not ensured in the town.

They said frequent load shedding and voltage fluctuation has become an every day affair in Satkhira district, causing immense sufferings to the people. Students are worst sufferers.

Fish processing units and cold storage industry are incurring losses due to power crisis. Production in Sundarban Textile Mills Ltd, the lone large scale industry in the district, and other mills and factories, is also being interrupted due to load shedding which continue up to 10 hours a day, they said. They submitted a memorandum to the DC.

Boat looted on Padma

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Pirates looted cash and valuables worth about Tk 2 lakh from an engine boat in the Jamuna river near Natuarpara Bazar at Kazipur upazila in Sirajganj district yesterday morning.

Police and locals said an engine boat with some 40 to 45 passengers was going to Natuarpara Bazar from Maizbari area at 6.00pm.

When the boat reached near the Natuarpara Bazar, a gang of pirates equipped with firearms intercepted it and looted cash and valuables worth Tk 2 lakh after beating its passengers mercilessly.

The injured passengers were treated at local clinics.

No case was filed in this connection. But, filing of a case is in process, the police said.



PHOTO: STAR

Teachers in Dinajpur brought out a procession in the town yesterday to press their 10-point demand.